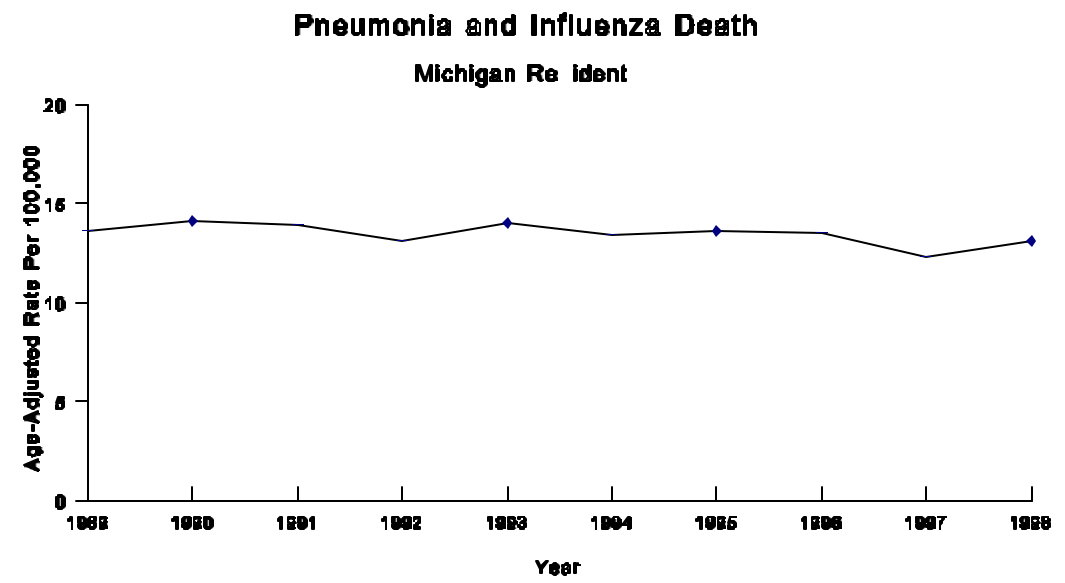


Vital Statistics Indicators

Pneumonia and Influenza Deaths



Source: Division for Vital Records and Health Statistics, MDCH

How are we doing?

Pneumonia and influenza is the sixth leading cause of all deaths in Michigan and the tenth leading cause of Years of Potential Life Lost (YPLL) for people below the age of 75.

Pneumonia is an inflammation of the lungs due to infection. Influenza is an infection of the respiratory tract that causes fever, muscle ache, and weakness. It is a leading cause of death primarily because it is a common complication of any serious illness. This indicator reflects a need to increase the use of preventive vaccines as well as to reduce barriers to health care access.

In 1998, there were 3,096 deaths due to pneumonia and influenza in Michigan. The age-adjusted rate for pneumonia and influenza deaths was 13.1 per 100,000 population. Overall the rate of death from pneumonia and influenza has remained relatively constant during the past 10 years.

How does Michigan compare with the U.S.?

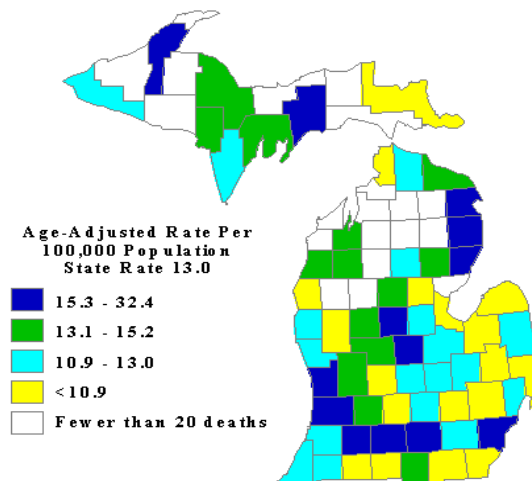
The age-adjusted pneumonia and influenza death rates for Michigan and the U.S. have remained close for many years. Michigan's 1997 age-adjusted death rate of 12.3 was similar to the U.S. rate of 12.9. Pneumonia and influenza was the sixth leading cause of all deaths in the U.S. and the eleventh leading

cause of YPLL in 1997.

How are different populations affected?

The very young and the elderly are at higher risk of dying from pneumonia and influenza. In Michigan, 89 percent of pneumonia and influenza deaths occurred in individuals aged 65 or older in 1998. Pneumonia and influenza is the fifth leading cause of death for this age group.

**Pneumonia and Influenza Death Rates
1996-1998 County Averages**



The 1998 age-adjusted death rate for African-Americans (21.1) was about 76 percent higher than the rate for whites (12.0). The age-adjusted death rate for men was 17.2 while it was 10.2 for women.

What other information is important to know?

Virus-infected droplets coughed or sneezed into the air spread influenza. It usually occurs in small outbreaks, but every few years epidemics arise. Outbreaks tend to occur in winter and generally spread rapidly through schools and institutions for the elderly.

People aged 65 and older should be vaccinated against influenza every year and against pneumonia at least once. The 1997 Michigan Behavioral Risk Factor Survey indicates that 63.2 percent of persons over 64 years of age had a flu shot within the past year and 45.8 percent had ever had a pneumonia vaccination.

What is the Department of Community Health doing to affect this indicator?

The department is actively working to decrease the incidence and impact of pneumonia and influenza. With departmental assistance, all local health departments in Michigan administer flu vaccines and 93% of them administer pneumonia vaccines. Adult Immunization Record cards are provided to local health departments and private providers to help patients keep track of their immunizations.

Preventive measures include distribution of an educational brochure addressing adult immunization. Efforts are directed to those with diabetes, seniors, others at high-risk as well as their physicians. The department also works with Area Agencies on Aging and senior centers throughout the state to conduct regular informational sessions on the importance of getting flu shots.

The department conducts influenza surveillance each year through a network of physicians and clinical laboratories throughout the state. Information about the type, frequency, and severity of illness is helpful to physicians who need to make individual preventive and therapeutic treatment decisions. Local health departments are assisted in the epidemiological investigation of unusually large or severe outbreaks of influenza in health care facilities or the community by department staff.

Last updated: February 2000.